

Clearing Up of 500 Years

Tablet Neglected for Years Fills Out Chronology to Deluge.

A SMALL tablet of baked clay broken into three fragments, which had been lying unnoticed in the Nippur Library collection of the University Museum at Philadelphia for more than twenty years, has just been the means of restoring more than five hundred years of ancient history. Translated by Dr. Leon Legrain, Curator of the Museum's Babylonian Section, it has turned out to be the missing part of a huge chronological tablet widely copied and circulated at the time of Abraham, which gave the names of dynasties and kings back to the Deluge.

Numerous copies of parts of these tablets have been dug up in various parts of Mesopotamia by American, British, French and German explorers, but by some singular misfortune all the fragments heretofore found were minus the columns listing the Sumerian dynasties between 3,500 and 3,000 B. C. From that year on archaeologists have been able to reconstruct the framework of Babylonian history with remarkable accuracy, but until the new find they had no means of determining the order of dynasties earlier than 3,000 B. C., some of the names of which were known.

A Gap of 500 Years.

Not only does the new tablet give this chronology, but it also gives the names of four dynasties heretofore unknown, the names of several kings which are not found elsewhere in ancient records, and considerable other information of almost incalculable value to the archaeologist. Incidentally, it appears to dispose of the mystery of Azag-Bau, the woman credited in an earlier tablet with founding the dynasty of Kish in 2875 and who was said to have reigned for 100 years. The present tablet asserts that it was Basha-Enzu, the son of Azag-Bau, who really founded this dynasty, and makes no mention of her ruling.

"Chronology is the framework of history," says Dr. Legrain in his description of the new fragment. "The names of the kings and the length of their reigns, the relation of father and son, the dynasty to which they

belonged and the city which became their capital, the total number of kings and years and one particular dynasty, and, best of all, fully developed lists of succeeding dynasties, are a leading light in the obscure path of the student of ancient history. Anything bearing on these subjects is a most valuable document for the scholar, the archaeologist or any man interested with the problem of origins.

"Among the few uncatalogued tablets in the Museum collection there has come to light, during the last summer, a fragment from Nippur which is of unusual importance in this connection, for it is part of a chronological tablet that fills a gap in the early history of Babylonia. It begins at a point prior to 3,500 B. C. and comes down to 3,000 B. C., covering a period of more than 500 years and connecting up with other chronological records that have come to light from time to time.

The Legendary Kings.

"By degrees, thanks to the documents published in the last ten years, we are reconstructing Babylonian history over the third millennium back to the legendary times of the kings after the flood. The part played in this reconstruction by the Babylonian expedition and excavations in Nippur cannot be overrated. Indeed, Nippur and its temple toward B. C. 2000, at the time of King Hammurabi, the very time when Abraham started on his long wandering career, appear more and more as a center of religious and intellectual life.

At Nippur records of the past used to be stored, preserved and compiled in form of statues, slabs of stone and votive objects covered with inscriptions and reliefs, recording the names of the kings, their wars, their victories and their offerings to the gods. That ancient institution, with all respect and allowance for time and place, might compare with the modern abbeys of Westminster and St. Denis. A collection of these inscriptions on a large tablet done by a scribe of the temple is among the most precious documents preserved in the Museum. All the inscriptions on that tablet concern three kings of the dynasty of Akkad, B. C. 2600, Sargon, Rimush and Manishtusu.

"Besides the newly found fragment the collection in the Museum contains other tablets of the same class. One of these is one-half of what must have been the standard work on chronology. It was a work complete in twelve columns, six on the obverse from left to right and

six on the reverse from right to left. Column twelve is accordingly the reverse of column one, and column eleven is opposed to column two. This half tablet gives on the obverse and reverse the beginning and the end of the chronological scheme down to 2,000 B. C., but gives no clue to the length of time covered by the missing portion or how to connect the fabulous kings who succeeded the flood with those of the dynasties of Ur and Isin. Its text extends across columns one, two and three on the obverse and includes columns ten, eleven and twelve on the reverse. Before the gap it fixes the dynasties of Kish, Uruk, Ur and Awan. After the gap are given the dynasties of Akkad, Gutti and Isin.

Columns Are Broken Off.

"The new fragment fits in the gap. It represents a portion of the text of columns four to five of the obverse and seven to nine of the reverse, with a few signs of columns three and ten, very useful to link it up with the text of the tablet just described. Unfortunately it does not belong to the same identical tablet. Their thickness is different. It is still more damaged. Top and bottom of all the columns are broken off.

"Despite necessary reservations in presence of a mangled text, the great interest of the new fragment lies in the fact that it restores the main lines of Babylonian chronology as set down by tradition among the scholars of Nippur about B. C. 2000. The Greek tradition of Abydenus and Berosus must be traced back to it. Four new dynasties of Kish, Hamazi, Adab and Mari will take rank soon after those of Ur and Awan and before those of Upi, Kish, Akkad, Gutti and Isin. We learn, too, the names of the first rulers of the Gutti; Inbia, Ingishu, Warlagaba and Iarlagarum, four out of a total of



Impressions taken from fragments of a clay seal on a bottle of Babylonian wine. Jars were stoppered first with a wooden plug and then clay was pressed in around the edges and sealed with the seals of the owners.



A proper name, Lu-du-ga, and A-bil-ni, his barber or servant. The seated figure is that of a god or goddess. The one standing is a worshiper, his hand raised in adoration. Back of him stands his protecting angel wearing a crown. This is a reproduction of a seal impression on a small clay tag or label of four thousand years ago.

twenty-one kings who occupied the land 124 years and 40 days.

"This new and welcome information must not blind us to the fact that absolutely reliable chronology is actually out of the question, not only because a legendary number of years is attributed to the kings of the first dynasty of Kish (some six, seven, eight or nine hundred years each), or because any attempt to supply by indirect computation the missing portions of the text would prove fruitless, but because the texts so far published do not agree in all details. Whether the various readings have to be traced back to the old scribe, or to the modern copyist has to be further established."

The translation:

Obverse, column three: reigned 30 years.

Elulu reigned 25 years.

Balulu reigned 36 years.

Four kings ruled 120 plus 51 years.

Ur was defeated by arms.

Column four: 4 or 6 kings ruled 3,600 plus 192 years.

Kish was defeated by arms, the kingdom passed to Hamazi.

In Hamazi . . . -ni-ish became king and reigned . . . years, &c.

"Summing up the new chronological data we may safely establish the

following scheme," added Dr. Legrain. "Beginning of dynasty of Isin about B. C. 2200; Ur, 2300; Gutti, 2425; Akkad, 2650; Kish, 2875; Upi, 3000; before which we have to place at least eight more dynasties of Mari, Adab, Hamazi, Kish, Awan, Ur, Uruk and Kish, about B. C. 3000 to 4000."

The "People of Gutium," referred to in the tablet, have been known to archaeologists only as invaders, probably tribesmen from the hills, who swept into the peaceful and fertile valley of Mesopotamia in 2425 B. C., conquered all the cities, and remained in control for more than a century. Some rather interesting speculation is aroused by the statement in the tablet that they "had no king." Was this the world's first republic? And if so, what was its method of choosing its leaders? Some of the cities named in the chronological lists have never been discovered, but doubtless some day they will be located and no one knows what stories of ancient enlightenment their ruins may yield.

Dr. Legrain is one of not more than a dozen living men who can read and translate Sumerian. This is a language that was considered in the "dead" class as long ago as 2500 B. C., when the later Babylonian language was in use. He is the author of several books and is now compiling a volume of illustrations of strange birds and animals that were in use by the artists of ancient Sumer and Babylon. This will show that virtually every heraldic sign developed in relatively modern times in all the European countries had its origin far back in the dawn of history.

One of the earliest of these signs was on the insignia of a scribe. The record of it was found in the Nippur collection of tablets on a lump of clay that had been used to seal a bottle of Babylonian wine. On the clay the owner of the coat of arms rolled his seal cylinder, thus leaving an impression that has remained for more than 4,000 years.

Cleopatra Was a Woman of Merit

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Apollodoros in that way fooled the guard.

"Cleopatra was brought before Caesar as a bundle. Before his eyes the straps were unloosed, and out of the bag stepped Cleopatra; like Aphrodite, according to the legend, from out the sea shell.

"Caesar was transformed into Cleopatra's spokesman after having been her judge."

Brandes discusses the Alexandrian war for no other purpose than to present to view Cleopatra, "for whose sake Caesar permitted his enemies undisturbed to gather armies against him in Asia, Africa, Spain, while, if Cleopatra had never existed, he could have put an end to the world war at once. For Cleopatra's sake he found himself in a more difficult position than ever before, and on her account he was compelled to wage war during more than four years subsequently. No other woman did him such harm, and none remained so precious to him until the last.

A Woman of Great Merit.

"Not that this passion was unreasonable or was bestowed upon one unworthy of it. Cleopatra possessed not only beauty, that beauty which takes equal rank with rich intelligence and rare goodness. Apart from her attractions she apparently was a woman of great merit.

"The fury with which she was defamed by historians and poets wanting to ingratiate themselves with Augustus makes no impression on a modern reader free from bias, and what, for instance, Plutarch tells about her long after her time is unreliable nonsense that he had heard from his great-grandfather, Nikarchos, who again built upon evidence

and anecdotes passing from mouth to mouth during 150 years, mostly among liberated slaves, and which go contrary to the facts. It is a pity that Shakespeare had no other source than Plutarch for his presentation of Cleopatra! True enough, it was not her he wished to picture with his portrait but evidently another woman much closer to him.

"Caesar never complained of Cleopatra. Nor did she give him any occasion. His love for Cleopatra, nevertheless, proved ruinous to him once more when again he saw her in Rome. On the completion of the Alexandrian war, and Caesar in the year 47 left Egypt, she bore him a son soon after his departure, who as prince of Egypt was called Ptolemy, but whom the mother named Caesarion; a designation that Caesar acknowledged. It is very certain that when in the year 46 she arrived in Rome to be near Caesar she had her tiny son with her.

Hated by the Romans.

"Although her reception was formal, still she was received in Rome as Queen over a great country that was the ally of the republic; she was the guest of the Dictator and resided in his gardens. But her coming in reality caused great offense; the antipathy of the Romans rose to fever heat. Not that Roman society objected to an illegitimate love connection. The old fashioned Puritanism existed no longer. It was a long time since the Roman matron remained at home at the spinning wheel.

"That Caesar's name in Rome was associated with some of the foremost women of the patrician class rather shed a halo around him than made a stain. And that in Africa he should have had an affair of the heart with an exotic queen like Eunoe of Mauritania or in Egypt a connection with the Queen of the Nile, those were travel adventures and indifferent galantries."

Brandes declares that the Romans

lost sight of the fact that Cleopatra was by no means a barbarian queen by descent, but to the contrary, of purest Greek stock. However, this did not matter; she came from Egypt. And that Caesar should let a woman from the land of the eunuchs and the magicians, and whose people worshiped deities with the heads of animals and stuffed birds take her place at his side so that all could gaze upon as if they were a united couple, that was a scandal. He, a Roman who for the fifth time had been chosen consul, and dictator for the third, that he should be the lover of an Egyptian—was an insult and a reckless disregard for the pride of the Roman people. As Merivale has said in "The Romans Under the Empire," it had the identical effect that would have been caused in the sixteenth century should an English peer or a Spanish grandee have married a Jewess. It was an open defiance of public opinion when Caesar placed a statue of her in the temple in representation of a Roman goddess. It also caused bad blood that he permitted her to call his son Caesarion.

How the murder of Caesar brought an end to the relationship between the Roman and the Egyptian Queen it is not necessary to particularize here. Also, in "Antony and Cleopatra" Shakespeare dramatizes vividly the further career of Cleopatra as enchantress.

Clodia and Fulvia.

There appeared on the Roman stage at the time of Caesar two women who played important parts in the political drama which witnessed the rise and fall of the dictator—Clodia and Fulvia. Of the former of these, Brandes says that she probably was descended from that famous Apollonius Claudius Cæcus, the builder of the Apollon Way and the Aqueduct. Her particular admirer was Cæsar Valerius Catullus, and around this couple Cicero wove a can-

vas showing Roman beauty at its worst. Every lover of Latin poetry is familiar with the manner in which Catullus sang the praises of Clodia, who comes before the reader in the form of his beloved Lesbia.

"Originally it was the intention of Catullus that his friend should be to that period as another Sappho," Brandes affirms, "her equal in power of attraction, knowledge and taste. Clodia was of an impetuous beauty and the aristocratic young men of the day danced attendance upon her in her house in Rome, her gardens along the Tiber, or at her country place in Bajæ. Married to the optimus, Quintus Metellus Celer, who had been praetor in 63 and consul in 60, he was considered a valuable military man. When he died in 59, very suddenly, the spiteful rumor had it that Clodia personally or through her brother had rid herself of her husband by giving him poison."

Brandes gives a detailed account of what happened when Clodia and Catullus fell out and how the latter rained abusive language over the one who formerly he had adored. Cicero occupies a prominent place in all those happenings. As one of her accusers he brought her before the Roman seat of judgment. But, argues Brandes, "to form a true picture of her presents us with unsurmountable difficulties, since we have not a single line from her hand or a work from her own mouth. Her violent accusers were a discarded lover and a malicious lawyer who persecuted her because in her daring and impudent brother he had found an enemy. Cicero had busied himself in a matter that did not concern him in the least.

The Rebellion of Women.

"That Clodia overstepped what was due old time Roman custom and morals is indisputable. But she was no exception in that respect. Emancipation of woman broke over Rome

during the last century of the republic. The ladies were getting tired of sitting at home while Roman and Greek courtesans took possession of their husbands."

Moral censors of to-day shoot wide of the mark if they adduce from what took place two thousand years ago that the world has changed little. But yet Brandes comes to the defense of the womankind of that period by calling attention to the kind of men that surrounded a Clodia, for instance. To judge her with some show of justice, he says, we must consider her environment. Cicero's enmity contributed chiefly toward the bad reputation attaching to her character.

"To understand women like Clodia," affirms the Danish writer, "her sister-in-law Fulvia, and others with similar instincts and methods of acting, we must remember that their blood was untamed. It was not for nothing that they were the females to the males who made conquest of the then known world. They followed their impulses, which were always impetuous, sometimes wild."

"If Clodia possessed the beauty of a bacchante, Fulvia's features were those of a beautiful but wild goddess of vengeance. Like Clodia, she is the feminine instinct of the time, but her aim lies in the direction of power and wealth, not to be worshiped by many men. Ambition to rule, covetousness, jealousy are her component parts. She looks upon herself as coming last in the historical events then centering, and she enjoys to make herself felt by gathering taxes, take revenge, have the weaker men obey her summons and setting the stronger rulers against each other to get back the one on whom depended her influence. She did not succeed in pushing aside Octavius so that Antony became absolute sovereign. She was no more successful in supplanting Cleopatra. Her life was passion's football; her death tragic."